

### Introduction

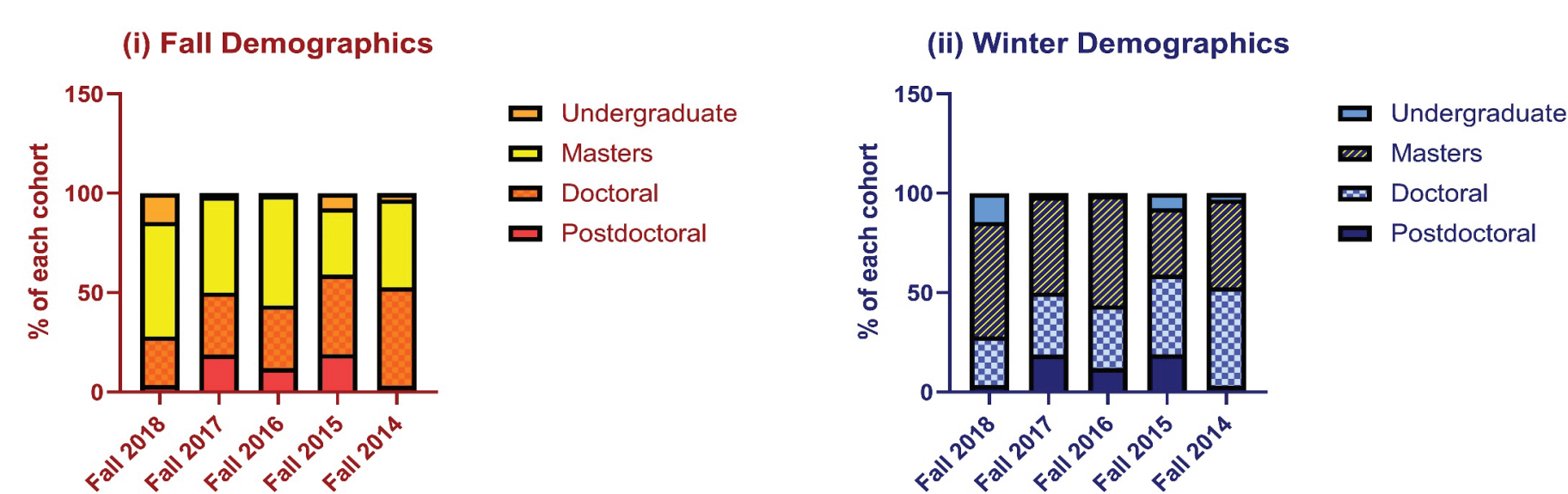
SKILLSETS is a McGill project launched in 2009 as a collaboration between McGill Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) and the Graduate and Postgraduate Studies (GPS). Through today's over 300 workshops, SKILLSETS aims to develop the professional skills of its graduate student body.

Basic Business Skills (BBS) is a 14-workshop program that has been offered biannually since 2010 to non-business graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. It aims to prepare students for nonacademic careers, such as consultancy and entrepreneurship in an attempt to address recent statistics on academic job opportunities: from 1976 to 2011, the increase in tenured and tenure track-positions has increased by only 23% (Curtis, 2011). In 2012/3, only 14% of life-sciences graduate students obtained a tenure track position within 6 years (Etmanski, 2018)

We know that the that students use their academic experiences to shape their professional personalities (Liddell et al., 2014). That is why we used positive and negative incentives based on the loss aversion concept that was developed by Kahneman and Tversky (1979-1990) to encourage commitment in students and trainees.

**Hypothesis:** : a no-show fee and a flexible registration deadline will boost graduate and postgraduate students' commitment to professional development

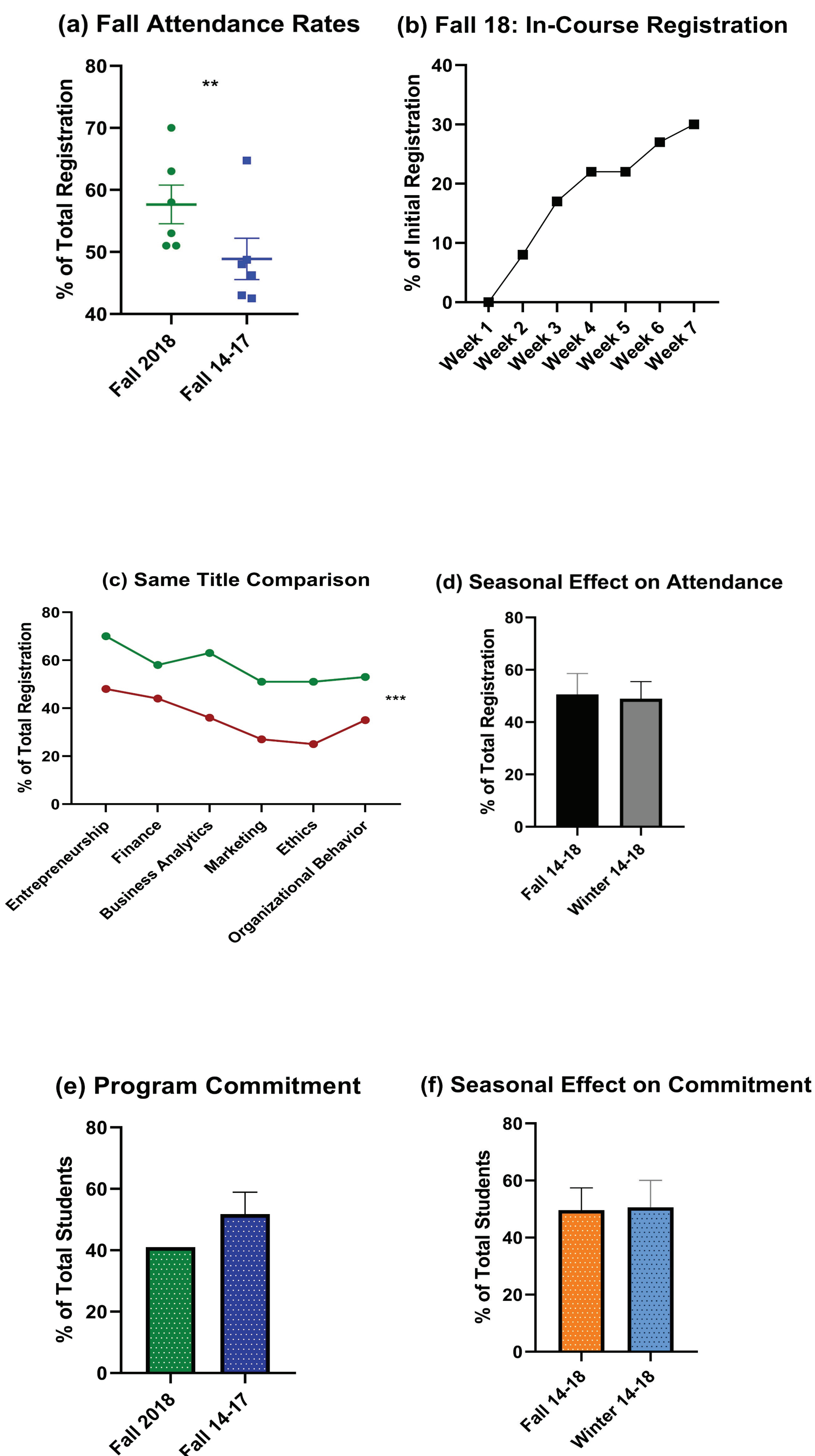
### Methods



This is a cohort, longitudinal study that took place between Winter 2014 to Fall 2018. The population is composed primarily of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for a total of 490 participants in fall and 455 in winter. The breakdown of which are illustrated in figures i and ii.

Fall 2018 is when we installed a flexible, in-course registration policy (instead of a limited window for registration) and a no-show fee of \$25 in case of registration and failure to attend nor cancel 48 hours in advance. The workshops are free of charge for all McGill affiliated trainees. Attestations of completion are issued after attending 8 sessions and a practice workshop. For the purpose of this poster, completion refers to attending 4 or more sessions by the 7<sup>th</sup> week. Statistical analysis is performed using paired student's t-test and one way ANOVA.

### Findings



### Conclusions

#### Our findings indicate:

- (a) There is a significant increase ( $P=0.0035$ ) in attendance per session when the in-course registration system is allowed and a no-show fee of \$25 are instituted.
- (b) registration continued throughout the semester. It might be contributing to the boost in attendance.
- (c) when controlling for the advertised session title, there is a significant increase in attendance within the same year ( $P=0.001$ )
- (d) There does not seem to be an effect of seasons on attendance.
- (e) When measuring commitment (attending  $\geq 4$  sessions by the 7<sup>th</sup> week), there seems to be a decreasing trend as a result of the new policies.
- (f) There does not seem to be a seasonal effect on students' commitment to the program.

#### Future directions:

- Replicating the Fall 2018 data would help solidify these findings.
- Measuring commitment as the number of students who received the attestation would be more accurate.

### Acknowledgement

We want to thank McGill's Teaching and Learning Services under the current leadership of Dr. Laura Winer for funding and supporting the SKILLSETS project. We also want to thank Mr. David Syncox for creating SKILLSETS and supporting Drs. May Shawi and Rabia Khan who were students then in bringing the concept of BBS into reality. Our speakers are an essential part of the series, we want to especially thank Mr. Enrico Cremonese, Mr. Didier Jean-Francois and Dr. Jean-Nicolas Reyt for their multiyear contributions. We also want to extend our gratitude to Mrs. Mary-Jo Rahal, Mrs. McDonagh and Mrs. Nazanin Rostami for their tremendous administrative efforts that make this program possible

### References

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